

BALLS CREEK SMALL AREA PLAN

Background and Recommendations

In September 1999, the Board of Commissioners directed staff to begin the process of developing small area plans (SAP), as identified in the County's Strategic Growth Plan. A citizen-based committee for the Balls Creek area, consisting of thirteen members, was appointed by the Board of Commissioners in early 2001. The committee met monthly to develop a plan which addresses the following seven issues: 1) land use and community design; 2) transportation; 3) community facilities and public services; 4) housing; 5) economic development; 6) natural resources; and 7) cultural resources.

In order to obtain input on these issues, the committee sponsored a community meeting in July 2001. Twenty-eight (28) citizens attended this meeting held at the Balls Creek Elementary School. The main issues presented at this meeting were preservation of rural character and a desire for public water and sewer. Also addressed was a desire for quality public planning policy. Information received at this meeting was used by the committee in the development of the plan's guiding principles and recommendations.

Following are highlights of the Plan's recommendations as formulated by the committee:

- Extensive residential rezonings – the committee is recommending that approximately 71% of their district be rezoned. Approximately 13% is proposed to be rezoned to R-3, which allows for doublewide manufactured homes and stick-built homes and 58% to be rezoned to R-1, which does not allow any type of manufactured home. The basis for the recommended rezonings is to preserve the historical, scenic and rural character of the area and to facilitate a proposed mixed-use “village” area near the Abernethy Center.
- High residential density is proposed in the northern portion of the district. This area would allow .75-acre lot sizes. Development should have a landscaped buffer along the road frontage and be encouraged to preserve existing trees.
- A medium residential density is proposed in the central portion of the district. In this area, one-acre lot sizes would be allowed. Landscaped buffers and preservation of existing trees is also encouraged in this district.
- A low-density area is recommended in the eastern half of the district. This area was designated low density because of the number of active farms and the location of Anderson Mountain. Densities in this area would be one unit per two acres.
- A 15% open space requirement for all residential single-family developments.
- A village area of mixed residential, commercial and office uses is noted in an area around the Abernethy Center. With future sewer and existing water, mixed uses could be supported in this area. Neighborhood commercial areas are noted at the intersections of Hwy. 16 with Bethany Church Road, Balls Creek Road and Buffalo Shoals Road. Also commercial nodes are identified at the intersections of Hwy. 10 with Bethany Church Road and Balls Creek Road. Smaller rural commercial nodes are designated at the intersections of East Maiden Road/Buffalo Shoals Road and East Bandys Cross Road/Buffalo Shoals Road.

- An Anderson Mountain Protection district which would allow lot sizes of two-acres in size but addresses environmentally-sensitive development design and architecturally-compatible buildings.

Note: See the recommendations, in their entirety, [here](#).

The committee sponsored a community review of the draft plan in October 2002. Seventeen (17) citizens attended this meeting. Overall, those who attended the meeting supported the recommendations of the committee. The committee reviewed comments received from this meeting and made some minor amendments to the plan. This included recommending additional zoning for stick-built homes only for the Anderson Mountain area, around Woodland Oaks subdivision and the Fox Dairy/Love Road area.

In February 2003, the committee Chair and a member met with the Board of Commissioners in one-on-one meetings to review the plan recommendations in detail. Recommendations for amendments were made to the committee and were subsequently reviewed by the committee at its April 7, 2003 meeting. The committee amended the residential density in the northeast section of the district to allow one-acre lot sizes to take advantage of the existing waterlines and to create a transition from the high-density to low-density area. The committee also added a recommendation to require driveways on major roads to meet certain construction standards similar to what was approved in the Sherrills Ford plan. Also, a recommendation for reduction in the speed limit to 45 m.p.h. on Balls Creek Road was included. With these amendments, the committee recommended the Balls Creek Small Area Plan at its April 7, 2003 meeting.

On April 28, 2003, the Balls Creek committee met jointly with the Planning Board in a work session to review the plan recommendations in detail. Two changes were made to the plan: 1) include Little Mtn. Road in the road widening requests; and 2) a minor amendment to the proposed rezoning map to provide a consistent corridor of R-1 zoning along Hwy. 16 to adjoin the current R-1 zoning in the southeastern section of the district.

The Planning Board conducted its public hearing on the plan at its May 19, 2003 meeting. The Board made a change to the residential density map to allow lower density (one-acre lots) along Hwy. 16 between Balls Creek Road and Bethany Church Road. The plan was subsequently recommended to the Board of Commissioners.

The Board of Commissioners will conduct its public hearing and accept your comments on the plan at its meeting on Monday, June 16, 2003 beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Robert E. Hibbitts Courtroom of the 1924 Courthouse in Newton. It is anticipated that they will receive your comments, decide if any changes should be made to the plan and consider adoption of the plan.

Should you have any questions regarding the Balls Creek Small Area Plan, you may contact Mary K. George, County Planner, at (828) 465-8264.